

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 7-10, 12-15, 17-20, 22-32, 34, 36-39, 41-44, 46-49 and 51-57 are now pending in the application. The amendments to the claims contained herein are of equivalent scope as originally filed and, thus, are not a narrowing amendment. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. §§ 102 AND 103

Claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-10, 12-15, 17-18, 20, 22-25, 26-32, 34, 36-39, 41-44, 46-49 and 51 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kanda (U.S. Pat. No. 5,649,710, hereinafter "Kanda"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 19 and 52-53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanda in view of Sekulch (U.S. Pat. No. 3,572,732, hereinafter "Sekulch"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-19, 22-23 and 25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Kanda (U.S. Pat. No. 5,649,710, hereinafter "Kanda"). Claims 26-51 also appear to be rejected in view of Kanda, although not explicitly noted as such by the Examiner. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 19 and 52-53 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kanda in view of Sekulch (U.S. Pat. No. 3,572,732, hereinafter "Sekulch"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

At the outset, Applicant notes that claims 1 and 26 have been amended to remove the term "generally" from the claim language directed to the first elastomeric

protrusion. Specifically, claims 1 and 26 now include "a first elastomeric protrusion extending between the radially extending sleeve portion and the faceplate portion and including a base and an end generally opposite the base and oriented radially towards the longitudinal axis of the shaft." Applicant notes that this amendment does not limit the radial extent of the first elastomeric protrusion towards the longitudinal axis of the shaft to a strict radial extent. The language "oriented radially towards the longitudinal axis of the shaft" includes an angular extent of the first elastomeric protrusion having a radially inward component.

The Examiner argues that Kanda teaches the limitations of previously presented claims 1 and 26. Specifically, the Examiner notes "Applicant's argument that the element 70 of Kanda does not appear to extend between the radially extending sleeve and the faceplate portion is not persuasive because applicant has claimed that the first elastomeric protrusion is extending **generally between not between.**" As indicated above, claims 1 and 26 have been amended to remove the term "generally" and now claim "a first elastomeric protrusion extending between the radially extending sleeve portion and the faceplate portion." The Examiner appears to concede that this limitation is not taught by Kanda. As such, Applicant believes that the Examiner's rejection of claims 1 and 26 has been overcome.

The Examiner also argues that "the protrusion [(70) of Kanda] is oriented generally radially toward the longitudinal axis ... because the base is extending toward the radially extending sleeve portion and the thickness of the protrusion is extending both radially toward the longitudinal axis of the shaft and axially inward." Applicant notes that claims 1 and 26 specifically state "an end generally opposite the base and

oriented radially towards the longitudinal axis of the shaft." As such, the end opposite the base is required to be oriented radially towards the longitudinal axis of the shaft. Applicant fails to see how end (70) in Kanda is oriented radially toward a longitudinal axis of the shaft. Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has taken an unreasonable interpretation of the phrase "oriented radially towards" by suggesting that a thickness of end (70) in Kanda teaches this limitation. Under the Examiner's interpretation, any and every structure could be interpreted as being oriented in any and every direction, as every structure occupies some three-dimensional space. Applicant therefore submits that the interpretation of "oriented" used by the Examiner would necessarily define all objects as being oriented in every direction and is therefore clearly unreasonable.

In view of the amendments and arguments discussed above, Applicant submits that claims 1 and 26 are now in condition for allowance. The amendments to the claims add no new matter requiring additional search, as they merely clarify the language of the claims. Claims 2, 4-5, 7-10, 12-15, 17-18, 20, 22-25 depend from claim 1 and claims 27-32, 34, 36-39, 41-44, 46-49 and 51 depend from claim 26, and should therefore be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-10, 12-15, 17-18, 20, 22-25, 26-32, 34, 36-39, 41-44, 46-49 and 51 are respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner states that claims 54-57 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. However, as indicated above, Applicant believes that claims 1 and 26

are in condition for allowance. Claims 54-57 depend from claims 1 and 26 and should be in condition for allowance as well.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (734) 354-5445.

Respectfully submitted,

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